

MEMO

DATE: December 26, 2006

TO: Board of Selectmen

FROM: Joe Wehr, Chairman
Charter Revision Commission

SUBJECT: Draft Report

Since our appointment in September 2005, the Charter Revision Commission (CRC) has studied suggestions from various staff members, boards, commissions and agencies and held two public hearings (January 24, 2006 & December 12, 2006) soliciting input from our residents. The CRC is pleased to submit the attached Draft Report setting forth our recommendations for proposed changes to the Charter.

Question #7 in the Draft Report proposes that purchases exceeding \$500,000 be sent to referendum. Some questions were raised at the December 12, 2006 Public Hearing suggesting that the dollar amount is too low and should be increased due to the cost of holding a referendum. We have asked the Finance Director to research how many expenditures of \$500,000 and over were made during the last 3-4 years to determine if the figure is too low. This information will be forwarded to the BOS as soon as we receive it.

In addition, the CRC conducted preliminary research on changing the current form of government to Town Manager/Administrator. The CRC heard presentations from both Mansfield and Vernon and had discussions with Colchester on this topic. The CRC thinks a change to a Town Manager/Administrator form of government is desirable and in the best interest of the Town. This would be a major change for Ellington and requires more study and community involvement and awareness than the CRC thought it had time to provide. The CRC recommends to the Board of Selectmen that they form an Ad Hoc Committee to study changing the current form of government to Town Manager/Administrator. The CRC recommends that the Board of Selectmen not wait five years until the next Charter Revision to study changing the current form of government to Town Manager/Administrator. The CRC suggests this committee be appointed during 2007, that the committee submit a report within 6–12 months of its creation and, if the committee recommends a change to Town Manager/Administrator form of government, a referendum be held within 12 months of their recommendation.

Also, at our last Public Hearing, several residents suggested that the functions of the Planning & Zoning Commission be split to form two separate commissions. The CRC supports this idea and suggests the next CRC consider it.

/ms

cc: A. Ryan, Town Attorney
CRC Members: Charlotte Adams
Tim Olmsted
John O'Shaughnessy
Gary Riley
Terry Shook